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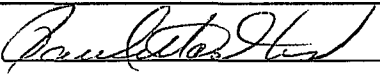
Recruiting Implications of the Long War for the Marine Corps

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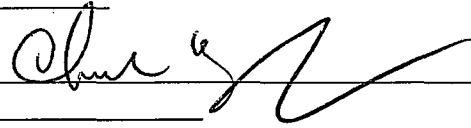
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Recruiting Implications of the Long War for the Marine Corps

Author: Major Walker Field, United States Marine Corps

Discussion: The Marine Corps is facing tremendous challenges in meeting global commitments and sustaining a proper force dwell time while remaining postured as America's 911 force. To this end, President Bush approved a proposal to increase personnel in the Marine Corps over the next five years to an end-strength goal of 202,000 Marines. Faced with the reality of a "long war" and in absence of a conscriptory draft, the Marine Corps must recruit annual personnel objectives under the auspices of the all-volunteer force (AVF).

These are uncharted waters for the Marine Corps as it has never had to fight a war of duration requiring substantial troop deployments without the benefit of the draft. The draft was in affect for World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and most of the Vietnam War. On 1 July 1973, the AVF was born, thus ending the military's reliance upon conscription to satisfy wartime personnel shortages. Recruiting a volunteer force during a violent, kinetic war is extremely difficult. *Can the Marine Corps meet its personnel demands without compromising recruit quality or essential diversity of the force?*

This research project examines three critical aspects of recruiting during the Long War: 1) quantity, 2) quality, and 3) diversity of the force. The research reveals that the Marine Corps has been successful in attracting sufficient numbers of new applicants, sustaining a high quality level of recruits and recruiting women and Hispanics, but unable to attract sufficient African Americans. It also reveals that the nation's elite are refraining from service. Recommendations are provided to sustain positive trends and reverse negative trends in attracting ample quantity and quality recruits for the future.

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INTRODUCTION

The Marine Corps is facing tremendous challenges in meeting global commitments and sustaining a proper force dwell time while remaining postured as America's 911 force. To this end, President Bush approved a proposal to increase personnel in the Marine Corps over the next five years to an end-strength goal of 202,000 Marines. Faced with the reality of a "long war" and in absence of a conscriptory draft, the Marine Corps must recruit annual personnel objectives under the auspices of the all-volunteer force (AVF).

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RECRUITING BASE: THE MILLENIAL GENERATION

In order to appreciate the recruiting challenge of today, it is necessary to understand who today's Marine Corps recruits are. They are the 17-27 year old teenagers and young adults who form Generation Y, commonly referred to as the Millennial generation. In an article published in Strategy and Business titled *Military of Millennials*, the authors describe Millennials as being much more similar to their grandparents than their parents.

Just how does this generation differ from its parents, the baby boomers, and its immediate predecessor, Generation X? With more than 75 million members, Generation Y is nearly as large as the baby boom and at least 50 percent larger than Generation X. The generation of baby boomers began life in the sunny, optimistic aftermath of WWII and were reared with unprecedented sensitivity... many members of this generation turned cynical and anti-authoritarian; they started careers and families later in life than their parents.

Generation X grew up in a time of dual-career couples and soaring corporate layoffs. Its members married even later than their baby-boomer predecessors – the median age at marriage has risen to 26 for women and 28 for men (from 20 for women and 23 for men in 1960) – and they have tended to steer away from large employers in favor of entrepreneurial. By contrast, Gen Y has grown up in an era when childbearing and child rearing seem once again to be social priorities. Like their grandparents, millennials appear deeply committed to family, community, and teamwork, which they have made priorities.²

The Millennials have grown up in a time where children were highly valued, and they have benefited from the longest economic boom in history. The recipients of persistent nurturing, they display a great deal of self-confidence. They appreciate structure and stability, and are typically team oriented, work well in groups, and are fantastic multi-taskers; these are qualities well suited for military service. Moreover, they are connected, avid users of the internet, text messaging, and computer technology.

Nevertheless, it is not just technology that makes them tick: the Millennials want to be a part of something bigger than themselves. In his book *Thriving & Surviving*, Peter Sheahan, a recognized expert on Millennials, says this generation is motivated by more

than just monetary compensation. "They're after a sense of purpose, work-life balance, fun, variety, respect, and the opportunity to do 'real' work that makes a difference."³

The Millenials are a highly educated, purpose driven generation who are currently serving as Staff Sergeants and Captains, constitute the entire first-term enlistment population, and will define the Corps' recruiting effort until 2015. This generation, reminiscent of their forefathers who fought World War II, has a predisposition to service; a quality that bodes well for the Corps' future recruiting effort.

QUANTITY

In spite of a challenging, wartime recruiting environment, the Marine Corps has accomplished its annual active enlisted mission in each of the last five years. Reporting to a Senate subcommittee on personnel in February 2008, the Marine Corps' top recruiter, Major General Richard Tryon, pointed out that even though last year's enlisted accession goal was increased to facilitate growth of the Corps' force, it was a banner year nonetheless. He further indicated that the recruiting command remains on pace to reach an end strength goal of 202,000 Marines by 2011.⁴ Though challenges in the recruiting environment will certainly persist, there is reason to be exceedingly optimistic about meeting recruiting goals in the near future.

But such optimism has not always been prevalent for recruiter's during the long war. In December 2003, the Marine Corps celebrated Marine Corps Recruiting Command's (MCRC) 100th consecutive iteration of attaining its monthly accession quota, commonly referred to as "making mission." The institution was very proud of and confident in its recruiting effort. The Corp's senior leadership had become accustomed to winning on the recruiting battlefield, sentiment that bode poorly for MCRC in the coming months.

As OIF commenced, personnel assignment managers were authorized to delay, and often outright cancel, orders to recruiting duty for many Marines in combat units. Confident that MCRC would still make mission, priority was justifiably (or not?) afforded to units in combat. The unintended consequence of manning combat units over recruiting stations, however, was the deprivation in MCRC of its most precious resource: the canvassing recruiter. A mere two years after commemorating MCRC's success, and for the first time in over a decade, the Marine Corps missed its recruiting goal in January 2005, and remained derailed for five months.

The Marine Corps recruiting struggles at that time can be attributed to many factors, including waning youth propensity, nightly newscasts depicting horrific fighting, and consequently a decline in influencer (i.e. parents, teachers, coaches, etc..) support for the war. However, the most predominant contributor to failure was self-inflicted: there simply were not enough recruiters on the street.

In March 2005, the Marine Corps took corrective action by initiating the first of several incremental increases to the total number of MCRC's canvassing recruiters. Likened to turning an ocean-liner, decisions made today regarding recruiting personnel would not begin to yield results for at least 6 months, and often as long as a year. Each additive recruiter had to be professionally trained, permanently re-stationed to one of 48 Recruiting Stations across the country, and assimilated into their new recruiting environment, all of which took valuable time. By the end of a tumultuous 2005, the increased recruiters were beginning to yield positive results. Since then, the Marine Corps has continued ascendant trends in making mission.

This brings us back to the present. Recruiting has been so productive in Fiscal Year 2008 that MCRC routinely makes mission by the month's third week, a feat reminiscent of pre war recruiting. A palatable degree of confidence and comfort is sure to accompany this success. As the force continues to grow, there will undoubtedly be greater demand for manpower allocation in meeting global commitments. The Marine Corps has returned to a recruiting crest of what needs not be a sine wave. It is incumbent upon the Marine Corps' leadership to protect recent gains by ensuring sufficient recruiters are assigned to MCRC, and in doing so, prevent return to an unpleasant trough.

QUALITY MATTERS

It is not just quantity that matters; the Corps' must be able to recruit quality young men and women to transform into capable warriors. The Marine Corps uses two methods to define a "quality" recruit: AFQT score and high school graduation rate. The Armed Forces Qualifying Test score (AFQT) is a composite score comprised of four elements of the Armed Services Vocation Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The ASVAB measures quantitative and verbal skills, and aptitude. A recruit's AFQT is used to determine initial entry to the service as well as assignment to an occupational specialty. Scores on the AFQT are divided into six categories, as depicted in table 1. Congress directs that individuals in category V are not eligible for military service, and no more than 20 percent of recruits can come from category IV. The Department of Defense (DoD) further constrains category IV accessions by mandating that no more than 4 percent of new recruits may be drawn from this category. Unlike categories I-III B, all category IV recruits must be a high school graduate. Further, DoD recommends that at least 60 percent of new recruits come from categories I-III A.

The Marine Corps has established more rigid standards by requiring no less than 63 percent of new recruits come from the I-III A category.

DoD defines a “high quality” recruit as one coming from

Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) Categories and Corresponding Percentile Scores	
AFQT Category	Percentile Score Range
I	93-99
II	65-92
III A	50-64
IIIB	31-49
IV	10-30
V	1-9

Table 1

the top 50 percent of the AFQT distribution (i.e., I-III A) and possessing a high school diploma. In terms of high school graduates, DoD restricts non-prior service accessions to no more than 10 percent non high school graduates. Here again the Marine Corps has established more stringent requirements in that no more than 5 percent can be accessed without a diploma.

It is important to remember, however, that this is an institutionally established objective way of measuring aptitude and defining quality parameters. It does not imply that a “high-quality” recruit will necessarily be a model Marine. A quality Marine is one who has un-reproached integrity, knows his or her job thoroughly, is a selfless leader intent upon making others better, is physically fit, or any number of other tangible and intangible attributes that determine a real life “high-quality” Marine.

To illuminate the utility in using AFQT and high school graduation as metrics in identifying recruits with above average aptitude and skills, David Armor and Paul Sackett provide an historical context.

The initial goal of the AFQT was to predict success in training (Eitelberg, Laurence, and Waters 1984). While the relationship between test scores and training grades is commonly measured by a correlation coefficient, the relationship is better visualized by the plotting of test scores against training performance, as shown in the figure 1 below. This figure summarizes a National Research Council (NRC) committee review of 178 military studies using AFQT

to predict training performance (Hartigan and Wigdor 1989). The second component of enlistment standards, high school diploma status, is used to predict not job performance, but rather an enlistee will complete a full term of service.

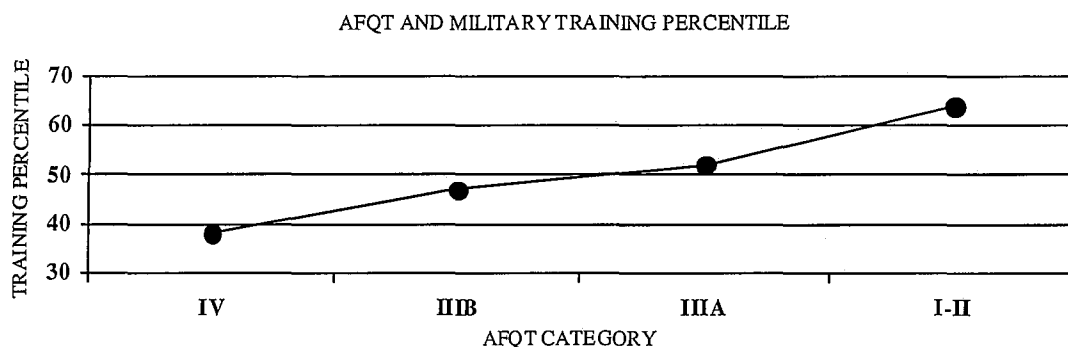


Figure 1

As such, it is not a measure of “can do”, but “will do”. Non-graduates have an attrition rate roughly twice as high as that of graduates.

The Marine Corps has exceeded DoD’s goal for recruits in the I-III A category of the ASVAB (see table 2) in each fiscal year from 2001-2007. From 65 in 2001, to a high of 69 in 2004, back to a level of 64 in 2007, the Marine Corps’ has sustained better than required numbers of high aptitude recruits. The ASVAB scoring system is based on a bell curve, where the 50th percentile represents the overall U.S. youth population, and anyone scoring higher than 50% is necessarily above average. Clearly, in spite of the ongoing long war, the Marine Corps continues to attract recruits who are collectively much smarter than their high school peers.

Similarly, the Marine Corps has exceeded DoD’s standard of at least 90 percent non-prior service recruits having a high school diploma. From 96 in 2001, to a six year high of 98 in 2003, and back to 96 percent in 2007, the Marine Corps continues to access larger numbers of better qualified recruits. By comparison, only 80 percent of the civilian youth population graduated from high school in 2006.

It is worth noting that the ASVAB scores and percentage of high school graduates revealed a slight spike from 2001-03, then leveled off from 2003-06. It is likely that the increase in quality from 2001 to 2003 was the product of

Marine Corps Non-Prior Service Recruit Quality		
Active Marine Corps		
Fiscal Year	AFQT Category I-III A	High School Graduate
2001	65	96
2002	67	97
2003	69	98
2004	69	97
2005	68	96
2006	67	97
2007	64	96
Source: Congressional Budget Office based on data from the DoD, Directorate for Accession Policy		

Table 2

heightened desire for national service across the country, following the tragic events of 9/11. This temporary condition offered unusually high applicant selectivity within the recruiting force. In essence, the non-prior service applicant availability was temporarily swollen, just as a river swells following a torrential downpour. However, as the “visible” war waged on in Iraq and Afghanistan, the initial surge in national patriotism waned, thus the recruiting market returned to normal levels. Similarly, the I-III A percentage and high school graduate percentages remained relatively constant from 2003-2006.

Last year, as the Marine Corps embarked upon its first of a five-year growth plan, the collective average of new applicant’s Alpha percentage fell by 3 percentage points. This is perceived as neither an aberration nor a negative indicator. In order to replicate a “swollen market”, the recruiting force may opt to use all of its strategic flexibility by accessing as many applicants as possible without dipping below the standard of 63%. So too would the recruiting force be expected to leverage a greater number of available applicants by consuming the full five percent allowable in non-high school graduates.

Nonetheless, the long war's affect on recruiting has not caused the Marine Corps to comprise standards of quality in non-prior service recruits.

MILLENIAL RECRUITS

Today's labor force is becoming increasingly more diverse as minorities are the fastest-growing segment of the Millenials. The Hispanic labor force is projected to grow by 34 percent from 2004 to 2014. The Asian labor force is expected to grow at a comparable 32 percent. The African American labor force is expected to grow by 17 percent, and the labor force of women is expected to grow by 11 percent. In contrast, however, the labor force of white men is only expected to grow by 7 percent during this period.⁵

The Millenials as a group are very diverse, relative to the Boomers and X'ers. With thirty-three percent of this generation a member of a minority group, the word 'minority' carries far less meaning to this and future generations.⁶ This matters to the Marine Corps because it helps forecast future demographic complexion. Thus today's marketing and advertising efforts can be tailored to shape tomorrow's desired force diversity.

DIVERSITY

Maintaining a diverse workforce is an essential focus of any organization's human resource department. In addition to legal ramifications, a diverse workforce lends essential equal opportunity credibility to any organization. And the military is no different. "Recruiting and retaining a diverse force is vital to the Marine Corps' success both today and tomorrow."⁷ This point is further corroborated in the Chief of Naval Operation's (CNO) recently issued policy on diversity. Adm. Gary Roughead urges his

leaders to anticipate and embrace the demographic changes of tomorrow, and build a Navy that always reflects the make up of the country. The CNO further emphasized that everyone brings abundant life experiences and perspectives, and approaches challenges or problems in different ways. He continues, "It is these very talents and perspectives that make the Navy successful."⁸

AFRICAN AMERICANS SERVING LESS

With a diverse workforce in mind, it is troubling to discover the negative affect of the long war on African American recruiting. Non-prior service enrollment of blacks in the Marine Corps has dropped by more than 33% since the Iraq and Afghanistan wars began. A phenomenon emerged during the long war with ostensibly disconcerting long-term implication. Though African Americans account for a larger share of enlisted Marines relative to the general population, as has been the case throughout the 35 years of the AVF, that margin is shrinking.⁹ The troubling signs are not lost on the Commandant. In a Marine Times article this past summer, General Conway said, "That's troubling to us, because we want to look like America. We are America's Marine Corps, and we need to look like the rest of the country."¹⁰ The Marines are not alone in this recruiting struggle. The Army has also witnessed a substantial drop in black accession, where 23% of new recruits in 2001 were black, they only accounted for 12.4% in 2006.¹¹

An historical context helps frame the problem. Through the 1980s, blacks constituted 18 percent of the Marine Corps' new accessions. The military's reputation as an equal opportunity employer in the late 70's and 80's led to a greater population share of blacks to serve. There were few such warnings a quarter century ago, when as a trailblazer in equal opportunity employment, the military offered a chance for education

and training. "You could go right off the street and into the military and make something of yourself," said Ronald Walters, director of African American Leadership Institute at the University of Maryland.¹² After the first Gulf War (1991) black accessions fell to 13 percent through the early 1990s, and dropped again in the mid 1990s before stabilizing at around 12 percent – a level equitable with their population share in the 2000 census. As equal opportunity gained more solid footing across America's landscape, a gradual return to population share in the 90's made sense.

With the invasion of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), a war largely unsupported in the black community, the downward trend resumed. A Pew Research Center poll in April 2003, a month after the war in Iraq began, found that 44 percent of African Americans supported the war in Iraq, compared to 77 percent whites and 75 percent Hispanics. As of August 2007, only 15 percent of blacks polled say that invading Iraq was the right decision.¹³ This is clearly an unpopular war in the African American community. Why is this war so much more unpopular with African Americans than with whites or Hispanics?

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have illuminated a racial divide in America, as evidenced in disparate support of the war from the onset between blacks and whites. Certainly politics and the current administration have something to do with different viewpoints, but so too does one's historical perspective and experience.

Many blacks see wrongs in the conflict that white Americans often cannot discern, African American scholars and analysts say. For one thing, many black people say their history makes them especially sensitive to the spectacle of a dominant entity asserting its will over a weaker minority. Then too, the US policy of preemption – attacking Iraq without provocation – smacks of a kind of harassment with which many blacks say they are all too familiar. "If anything, says University of Pennsylvania sociologist Elijah Anderson, "Bush puts forth an

agenda seen by black people as antagonistic. That accounts for a huge amount of alienation in the black community. That makes blacks turned off by this war.”¹⁴

That is not to suggest that African Americans are necessarily anti-war or anti-service, just not in this war at this time. The US decision to attack Iraq preemptively, without proof that Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction, reminds some blacks of hostile police behavior. “It rings of the experience of cops’ saying, ‘I thought I saw a gun’ just to justify the shooting of an unarmed black suspect,” said Mr. William Spriggs, executive director of the National Urban League Institute for Opportunity and Equality in Washington. He continued, “You have to give us more than ‘I thought I saw a gun’.”¹⁵

In a New York Times article this past August, Major General Thomas Bostick (USA), himself a black graduate of West Point, said there were several reasons for the drop in African American new accessions, including a healthy job market competing for youths but also African Americans’ disapproval of the war. Bostick said parents and educators who had recommended the military in the past might be less inclined to do so today.¹⁶

Thus, many African Americans find themselves in a dilemma, politically opposing a war in which they overwhelmingly lend support to the individual African American service member. Retired Navy Officer Gregory Black, who runs a web site called Black Military World, has been facilitating discussion about the topic. “There are a lot of African-Americans that will come out and openly support the military, but when it comes to supporting the war, I haven’t found a single one,” Black said.¹⁷ The vast majority of Americans support his assertion, where public opinion for the military indicates that of the major U.S. government institutions, the military garners America’s greatest confidence.¹⁸

The disconnect lies between African American's perception of this particular war and their recognition of the Marine Corps as a viable career option. Current political tension is painting military service in an unfair manner. Whether the conflict is a war to secure national survival (i.e. WWII), or a conflict to lend regional stability to the Middle East, Marine Corps service remains equally viable as a choice of profession. Contrary to public opinion, African Americans serving within the Marine Corps today are very content with military service, as evidenced daily on scores of reenlistment documents.¹⁹

A sure sign of job satisfaction is expressed in the decision to reenlist for subsequent tours of Marine Corps service. In 2006, African Americans reenlisted at a rate of 40 percent, nearly twice that of white reenlistment rates and one and one-half times more than Hispanics. Black Marines are more likely today to remain for a full career than any other group. Moreover, as reenlistment is an expression of ones personal job satisfaction, so too is long-term reenlistment an indicator of satisfaction in an institution. As reported in a recent CNA study, "...between 1980 and 2006, they [black Marines] reenlisted at higher average rates – *at every reenlistment point* - than members of any other racial/ethnic group."

And for those who remain in the Marine Corps to pursue a full career, promotion opportunity to senior enlisted ranks is far greater than any other demographic group, as African Americans constitute the largest relative population share of all racial groups. In the 1980s, African Americans constituted only 18 percent of the new accessions. Yet Marine E-9s today are comprised of 32 percent African Americans.

Perhaps the perception of military service *is* beginning to change in the African American community, as FY 2007 recorded a slight rebound from the seven-year

downward trend in African American new-accessions. The black proportion of Marine Corps' new recruits rose by nearly 40 percent, increasing from 7.8 percent in 2006 to 10.9 percent in 2007.²⁰ While this increase is indeed positive, it is still well below the population share of 12.2 percent.²¹ In order to convert last year's success into positive out-year momentum, it is incumbent upon the Marine Corps to bridge the gap between the African American communities' heightened disdain for this war and their recognition of the Marine Corps as a viable career option for young adults. The target audience for this message of awareness remains the millennial influencer: parents, teachers, coaches, clergy, and civic leaders. With the long-term danger of under-representing an extremely important sector of society, the Marine Corps should make recruiting African Americans a top priority for planning and resources.

HISPANIC YOUTH UNDENIABLY ON BOARD

In perhaps the most intriguing aspect of wartime recruiting, Hispanic accessions have soared. Americans of Latin American and Spanish origin do not form a race but an "ethnicity," known as Hispanics and Latinos, henceforth referred to as Hispanics. Since 2003, Hispanic non-prior service accessions in the Marine Corps have exceeded the overall population share, and have been the highest of the four branches of military service.²² At the beginning of hostilities in Iraq, a high desire to enlist was likely the by-product of a national wave of Hispanic patriotism. In April 2003, three-quarters of US born Hispanics said they supported the war.²³ By the War's fourth year, the Hispanic mood toward the war had drastically shifted. In a poll conducted in January 2007, only one in four Hispanics thought the U.S. made the right decision in using military force.²⁴

Despite waning support for the war, the American population as a whole remains confident in the military.

In the decades following the Vietnam War, strongly positive attitudes toward the military were a rarity. Pew/Times Mirror surveys found “very favorable” attitudes toward the military in the neighborhood of 20% in the late 1980s, jumping briefly to 60% in the aftermath of the short and successful Persian Gulf War, and then retreating into the 20-30% range until the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Centers in September 2001. In July 2001, before 9/11 terrorists attacks, a Pew survey found 29% of Americans expressing a very favorable view of the U.S. military.

In the wake of the attacks, approval soared as in 1991. In a May 2002 Newsweek poll, positive attitudes toward the military were nearly universal: six in ten among the public (59%) expressed a very favorable view of the U.S. military. Three years later, in March 2005, a Pew survey found little decline in those high levels of approval: fully 87% had a favorable view of the military. Pew’s most recent sounding on this opinion in January 2007 found those numbers virtually unchanged: 84% expressed a favorable view of the military.²⁵

Similarly, and specific to Hispanic recruits, research shows that there is widespread support for military service within the Hispanic community. The propensity to serve in the military – especially in the Marine Corps – is high among Latinos. Hispanics are more likely to complete boot camp, finish their military service, and to reenlist than any other group of Marines.²⁶

Besides the rapid growth in Hispanic population, Hispanic recruits are likely to continue joining in large numbers for several reasons. First, the Marine Corps’ national marketing strategy includes targeting Hispanic youth with Spanish-language media (radio and television). Couple the media initiative with a concentration of Hispanic recruiters in densely populated Hispanic communities, and the Corps has successfully localized military recruitment.

Hispanics remain more highly represented in the Marine Corps than any other service, a phenomenon in part explained by the Marine Corps’ appeal to Hispanic family

values. Retired Brigadier General Bernardo Negrete (USA), formerly of the Army Recruiting Command, says a familiar environment attracts Hispanics toward the armed forces: "The military structure is very similar to that of a typical Hispanic family. Respect for discipline, a strong sense of responsibility and bulletproof loyalty."²⁷ However, not all agree that it is that simple. A Vietnam veteran and professor at the University of California at San Diego, Jorge Mariscal disagrees. "Poverty and lack of opportunities are driving a generation of Hispanics to war," he said. "They can't find a job or pay for college."²⁸

Hispanics are the largest minority population in the country, composing 13.9% of the population, according to a recent Center for Naval Analysis study (September 2007).²⁹ As indicated early, Hispanics are expected to experience the greatest growth among all racial or ethnic groups in the coming decade. As the largest minority group in America, and by far the fastest growing group collectively, indications are that Hispanics will continue to be an integral part of the Marine Corps recruiting effort.

RECRUITING FEMALES

On another positive note, active duty non-prior service female accessions have exceeded the annual goal in each of the previous four fiscal years. In fact, in 2007 the Marine Corps greatly exceeded its female goal by reaching 105% of 2007's objective.³⁰ This seems a bit counter-intuitive. Could the influence of an on-going war cause more women to join the service? Or rather, has a tradition of female service been cultivated as a result of the AVF's establishment in 1973?

In an April 2002 article titled *Women and Minorities in America's volunteer Military*, the authors present a compelling explanation for the military's attractiveness to women.

First, in an internal labor market where everyone starts at the bottom, those who stay will have been through the same vetting process. In the military, this process is both defined and widely believed to be one that advances the most qualified. Second, and perhaps more important, is the fact that the promotion process looks at "everyone". Though women and minorities had to start at the bottom and wait for 20 years to reach the top ranks, once they reached the top, they were competitive with their male peers. In reviewing top ranks and progress, only 1% of the enlisted force is allowed to hold an E-9 rank, thus it is a very competitive selection process. While women comprised only 8.3% of E-9 enlisted accession group (28 years ago), they comprise 13.4% of E-9s.³¹

Ms. Janet Hoffheins, Deputy Director of DoD Civilian Personnel Management Services, indicated a similar increase in active duty women officers was realized. She went on to say "(DoD has) long been known to have a more diverse workforce than the overall U. S. labor force."³²

There are many reasons a young women might choose the military as a career option. The intangible pride of belonging to an elite organization and leadership development, or the tangible nature of attaining education and training, to the physical challenge of military service, just to name a few. These motives are generally shared with male applicants. Where female applicants are similar to black applicants but differ from white males, however, is in the recognition that the legacy of equal opportunity afforded to minorities by the AVF over the previous three decades. Still today this aspect resonates with female applicants as an operative feature in choosing a career. The implication to the Marine Corps is positive as it pertains to attracting sufficient quantity of young women into the active component of the Marine Corps.

ELITES OPT OUT

Unlike females, America's elite are opting out of wartime service. While it is common for civilians in positions of influence to praise the men and women who serve, there is evidence that of all segments of society, the non-veteran civilian leadership class has the least esteem for the military. In a recent article about 21st century war, Ralph Peters asserted that they are "delighted to pose for campaign photos with our troops, [but] elected officials in private disdain the military."³³

Perhaps this is because of all Americans they have the fewest connections to the military.

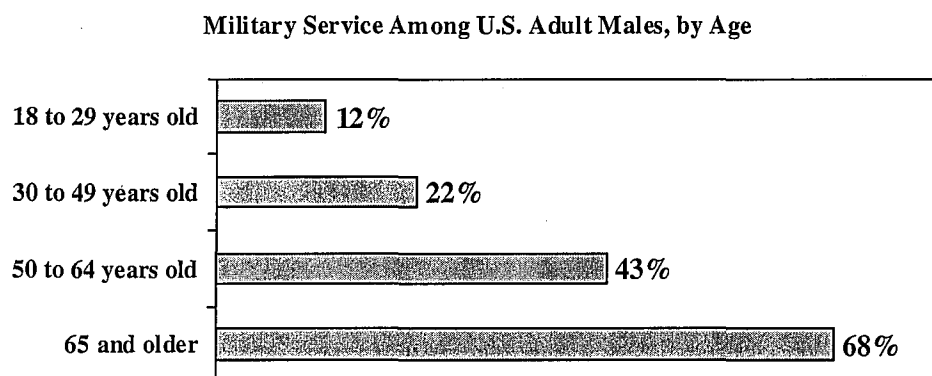
In the most important recent study on the subject of civil-military affairs, American leaders and members of the general public who had no military service experience were polled, along with military and reserve leaders, and civilian veterans. As expected, virtually everyone repeated that they were "proud of the men and women who serve in the military" and have confidence in the ability of our military to perform well in wartime." But our society's most powerful leaders who had no military experience parted company with other American groups in significant ways. For instance, fewer than half of the leaders in the larger society thought the U.S. armed forces were attracting high-quality, motivated recruits. In contrast, a strong majority – more than three-quarters – of military leaders thought they were. People in [civilian] leadership positions in society and without military experience, in fact, had the lowest opinion of the military of any group surveyed.³⁴

In the growing partition between the military and governing elite civilians, it is more than just opinions that count; actual service matters. Peters continues, "We're in trouble. We're in danger of losing more wars. Our troops haven't forgotten how to fight. We've never had better. But our leaders and many of our fellow Americans no longer grasp what war means."³⁵

How did we get to this point? Many point to the unpopular Vietnam War and the propensity for the elite to circumvent the draft as the impetus for the break in traditional

uniformed service. In the past, candidates who came of age during World War II, such as John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, George H. W. Bush, and Bob Dole, all served in the military. However, recent presidential elections were conducted without men of military service, like Bill Clinton, Howard Dean, and John Kerry -- all of whom came of age during the Vietnam War era.³⁶ Though our current President served briefly in the Texas Air National Guard, there is compelling evidence that he never fulfilled his service obligation. The current presidential campaign is no different; only one serious aspirant in either party is a veteran. Sen. John McCain is the only candidate with prior military service, retiring as a Captain in the Navy.

Nearly three-quarters of American men 65 and older have served in the military (see figure 2). "Military service has a decidedly generational cast," reports Jeffery Jones in an article about military service in the US. He continues, "Those generational differences clearly reflect the ending of the draft in 1973, as well as the lack in recent decades of large-scale wars such as World War II...that required large numbers of troops." Yet a lack of military draft isn't solely responsible for the country's elite refraining from military service.



Source: Gallup Poll conducted in Feb 2004 regarding Military Service in the U.S.

Figure 2

Another aspect of privileged America's refrain from military service stems from resistance by elite universities to allow Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC) on campus. From Roth-Douguet and Schaeffer, "The current antipathy to the military has its roots in the politics of the 1960s and early 1970s. The spirit of the student deferments and exemptions of the Vietnam era has been carried forward into the all-volunteer era." This point is illustrated in current ROTC status: "in 1956, 400 out of 750 in Princeton's graduating class went into the military. In contrast, in 2004, only 9 members of Princeton's graduating class entered the service, and they led the Ivy League in numbers!" Other elite universities have followed suit. At Harvard, where the nation's first ROTC was founded, school government no longer allows any on-campus formal support whatsoever. But they are not alone; Yale, Stanford, Brown, Columbia, and the University of Chicago no longer allow ROTC access on campus either.

It is not as if the elite universities offer a substantial number of possible recruits. Nor is the implication that elites, and to a greater degree Americas' most wealthy households, refusal to serve connotes that the military is now comprised of the poor and unfortunate. That could not be further from the truth. A recent Congressional Budget Office study indicated youth in the lowest socioeconomic income levels, as well as the highest-income families are far less likely to be represented in the military. Thus, the military is primarily comprised of youths from the 10 to 75 percent income categories.³⁷ Middle class Americans are predominantly fighting today's war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The issue, of course, is our nation's leading universities produce a disproportionate number of U.S. political leaders.³⁸ As General Krulak forecast a decade ago, the character of future conflicts would be more like the "Stepchild of Chechnya"

than Operation Desert Storm. Similarly, the Quadrennial Defense Review of 2006 concluded, "In the post-September 11 world, irregular warfare has emerged as the dominant form of warfare confronting the United States." Generally speaking, the use of military forces in large-scale conventional warfare can achieve a political aim. The other instruments of national power (Diplomacy, Information, and Economics) play less of a role in many historical conventional warfare examples. Thus the President and Congress need not be as astute in synergizing all elements of national power in major theater war of a conventional nature. The two World Wars and Korean War, where the "M" was dominant illustrate this point.

But that certainly isn't the case in irregular warfare, where the military option can achieve countless tactical successes without accomplishing one-step in the long climb toward strategic aim. It is incumbent upon the Nation's leaders to understand how and when to use military force in a conflict, but fewer and fewer political leaders do. This point was made succinctly at the retirement of one the Corps' most revered warfighters.

Today we are suffering through the agony of watching and waiting for our political masters and the American people to decide what the U.S. military should look like in the future. It is especially agonizing because the political leaders...have very little association with the armed forces. Consequently, they have very little awareness of how we function.

General Anthony Zinni, U.S.M.C.³⁹

The American defeat in Vietnam reinforced the recognition that conventional methods of fighting were inadequate to confront a politically sophisticated enemy on his native turf. The same can be said of our experience in OIF-1, a campaign capped off by our President's "victory flight" in May 2003. It was a tremendous military victory, but accomplished little toward achieving the ultimate political end state. Unfortunately, the expanse between the military and ruling civilian elite grows every widening; a trend

exacerbated by the long war. The Marine Corps' leadership must be even more proactive in advising civilian leaders about the use of military force in accomplishing political objectives.

CONCLUSION

Recruiting an all-volunteer Marine Corps for the 21st century will be a challenging endeavor, complicated by the long war and personnel endstrength increases through 2011. Predictions that the Marine Corps would become composed mainly of minorities and the very poor during the long war, however, have not come true.⁴⁰ If the first 5 years of the long war are a foreshadowing of the future, the Marine Corps will achieve annual growth milestones enroute to its high-water mark of 202,000 members in 2011. The following recommendations are provided to contribute to MCRC's successful attainment of annual recruiting goals.

The White House should implement a National Service Campaign in which elected officials openly talk about the viability and honor in military service. While all politicians seem eager to praise individual service members serving abroad, few are willing to publically endorse military service as a viable career option for fear of alienating their political constituents. If the White House pressed an agenda where all congressional members *praised military service as a matter of practice*, perhaps the gap between the millennial generation and civilian elite who view military service as pedestrian could be bridged; today's millennial youth who are eager to be a part of something important may thusly be enticed to follow the steps of their great grandparents.

Refrain from compromising quality. An intangible benefit the Marine Corps has over the other services is the public's perception of the Corps' unwillingness to

compromise standards. Often potential applicants, with parent in tow, comment on an unwavering commitment to standards as the most attractive aspect of the Marine Corps. Equally important to meeting the public's expectation, high aptitude and high school graduation necessarily equate to a better-trained warrior. There are many aspects of tomorrow's battlefield that are unknown, but of the requirement to have an ethically bound, intelligent warrior capable of making sound decisions we can be certain. With the ability to compromise months of diplomatically earned capital in a single act of malice, the Corporal has truly become strategic. By all means, the Marine Corps must remain true to quality standards.

The intelligent and higher educated recruit must also be a mirror of society's diverse landscape. The Marine Corps' legitimacy as an equal opportunity organization is contingent upon it. Accordingly, the Marine Corps must capitalize on the gain achieved in 2007 relative to African American non-prior service accessions in order to protect against long-term diminishing black service representation. The challenge lies not with the recruiter on the street. Success long term will be born on the backs of those who can affect change of awareness in Millennial influencers. A National Service Campaign would help here also, by framing the Marine Corps as a viable career option in the eyes of African American influencers, who appear blinded by disdain for this administration and this war. For it is the influencers who are currently holding back African American millennials; the Marine Corps' long-term credibility as a diverse organization may very well be reliant upon it.

The Marine Corps' ability to appeal to Hispanic youth is certainly working. As Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group, do not rest on the laurels of today's

success. More so than ever, retain Hispanic teens as an important aspect of the marketing and advertising campaign. Continue to place Hispanic recruiters in urban centers with dense Hispanic population.

Lastly, the Marine Corps' leadership must protect the recruiting effort by ensuring sufficient Marines are assigned to recruiting duty. Recent history illustrates the recruiting bill of over-confidence, a price we should be unwilling to pay again in the future.

Foreseeable irregular wars necessitate an intelligent warrior capable of restraint and cooperation on the battlefield, equally if not more so than an ability to locate, close with, and destroy the enemy. Implications are that tomorrow's Millennial recruit will be more intelligent and higher educated than his or her high school peer of today. This combination necessarily equates to higher performance and increased readiness; in this regard, the future is bright for the Marine Corps.

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